



The Whistle

WORK AND LIFE AT GEORGIA TECH • June 21, 2021



Vol. 46, No. 13
whistle.gatech.edu

Tech Enters New Fiscal Year on Positive Note

RACHAEL POCKLINGTON
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

With the new fiscal year approaching, Georgia Tech is in a better position because of higher than expected enrollment numbers, which are expected to continue into the next academic year.

“Given the instability of the past year, this is not your typical scenario in higher education and we are cautiously optimistic moving forward,” said Kelly Fox, executive vice president for Administration and Finance.

Comparing Spring 2020 with Spring 2021 enrollment, among all 26 schools in the University System of Georgia (USG), Tech had the largest growth in terms of number of students, with

an increase of 4,223 students (mostly at the graduate level), and in terms of percentage, at 11.9%. Overall, the system averaged an increase of 1.3% in spring 2021.

Thanks to strong enrollment numbers and healthier than expected state tax revenue collections, Georgia Tech is receiving \$33 million in new state formula funding for fiscal year 2022. In total, state appropriations account for 16% of Georgia Tech’s FY22 budget of \$2.3 billion.

In looking at Georgia Tech’s overall budget, it is important to understand the vulnerability of state appropriations, which have been increasing in dollars along with Tech’s enrollment

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Photo courtesy of the School of Literature, Media, and Communication

The HipHop2020 Innovation Archive in the Skiles Classroom Building.

Preserving Hip Hop’s Past and Building a Better Future

MICHAEL PEARSON
IVAN ALLEN COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

To Joycelyn Wilson, hip hop isn’t only a defining culture and art form of our age. It’s also a powerful educational tool, one she uses daily in her job as an assistant professor in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication (LMC).

“Baked into hip hop is the art of schooling, the art of teaching and learning and innovation, and justice,” Wilson said.

Among Wilson’s initiatives since coming to Georgia Tech in 2017 is the HipHop2020 Innovation Archive, a collection of albums, autographs, and other memorabilia donated by Atlanta hip hop DJ Michael Webster.

The collection lives in a small space in the Skiles Classroom Building. Wilson has a goal of building out the physical space, adding more educational content to the project’s website, and putting the finishing touches on a virtual model of Webster’s childhood basement studio.

“The long-range plan is to design a platform that allows educators, teachers, and music enthusiasts to come to a site, a platform, where they can find

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New Website for Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP), managed by the University System of Georgia and Kepro, has a new website — USG MyLifeExpert. This secure and confidential member website is open and ready for use.

Visit usg.mylifeexpert.com and enter the company code **USGCares**. From there, you can establish a unique login and password. You can also access a Kepro EAP consultant at 1.844.243.4440.

BRINGING ENERGY TO MIDTOWN



Photos by Allison Carter

President Ángel Cabrera cuts the ribbon at a celebration event June 16 with Georgia Power for the opening of a microgrid in Tech Square. The space features a mural by local artist George F. Baker III (right). Learn more at c.gatech.edu/grid.

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but declining as a percentage of the total budget for nearly a decade. This year, tuition revenue exceeds state appropriations for the 12th consecutive year.

In addition, the Board of Regents also voted to keep tuition and mandatory fees — another source of revenue for USG institutions — steady across the system for the upcoming academic year.

“While we are very fortunate to end this year better than expected, there are sensitivities, and we need to be mindful of all the variables that contribute to the health of our budget,” Fox said.

The rollout of the Institute’s strategic plan earlier this year is helping to guide how Tech will invest this new funding to advance many of the Institute’s goals and values. Here are a few highlights from the approved FY22 budget:

Retention and support of faculty and staff:

- \$8.5 million initially budgeted for faculty and staff equity pool adjustments. While merit increases are not funded by the state in FY22, Georgia Tech is able to provide equity adjustments with the potential to reevaluate minimum wages and review current salary ranges with market comparisons. This reflects the minimum amount of investment pending fall semester tuition revenues. Adjustments are expected in the first and second quarters of FY22.
- More than \$3.5 million for faculty startup packages.
- \$800,000 for faculty and staff retention pool, with \$400,000 budgeted for each.
- \$740,000 for faculty promotion and tenure.

Students are our top priority:

- \$1.2 million for student advisory positions (financial, academic, and admission) across the Institute to help ensure student success.
- \$750,000 to support graduate students primarily by covering the increased costs in student health insurance plans for graduate teaching and research assistants.
- \$750,000 to help fund graduate teaching assistant stipends as well as increasing the number of teaching assistants.
- \$300,000 to create career educator positions.

Support of the Institute’s growth:

- Nearly \$2 million for building and associated infrastructure renovations.
- \$1.3 million for capital campaign support.
- \$890,000 to create positions to support OneUSG.

FACULTY AND STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Nelson Baker, dean of Professional Education, received the 2021 Award for Individual Leadership in Continuing Education from the International Association of Continuing Engineering Education, an organization that supports and enhances lifelong engineering education and training around the globe.

André Brock, associate professor in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication, has received a sub-grant from the University of Michigan to further interdisciplinary research into issues of “race, difference, and computation.” The sub-grant, part of a \$4.8 million award to the University of Michigan from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, will fund the creation of the Project on Rhetoric of Equity, Access, Computation, and Humanities (PREACH) Lab. It will be part of the Digital Inquiry, Speculation, Collaboration, and Optimism (DISCO) network at the University of Michigan, which the Mellon Award supports.

John Cressler, the Schlumberger Chair in Electronics in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering and the Ken Byers Teaching Fellow in Science and Religion, will receive the 2020 Outstanding Educator Award from the IEEE Atlanta Section at a virtual banquet hosted by the group in November. This award is presented to a member of the Atlanta IEEE community who has made continued and dedicated contributions to education through teaching in industry, government, or an institution of higher education.

Lakshmi “Prasad” Dasi’s contributions to heart valve engineering and biofluid mechanics have earned him a place among the top medical and biological engineers in the country. The American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering announced in February that Dasi is joining its College of Fellows as part of the 2021 class. Election to fellow is an honor reserved

for just 2% of the top medical and biological engineering leaders in the nation.

COLOR Magazine has recognized **Karmella Haynes**, assistant professor in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering, as a leading innovator in science, technology, engineering, and math at its inaugural Women of COLOR STEM Achievement Awards. Haynes was one of eight women celebrated at a virtual ceremony in late May. The award recognizes “a leader who identifies, supports, and promotes innovative practices that address important challenges in expanding access to quality STEM education.” Award nominations came from scientists and health professionals across the country.

Asif Khan, assistant professor in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, has been chosen for a DARPA Young Faculty Award. Khan is receiving this award for his research on ferroelectric field-effect transistors for embedded non-volatile memory applications. The project will focus on solving the critical voltage problem of this device technology.

Srinivas Peeta, who holds the Frederick R. Dickerson Chair in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering and a joint appointment in the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering, has been recognized with the 2020 Matthew G. Karlaftis Best Paper Award. The award is given annually for the best paper that appears in the *Journal of Infrastructure Systems*.

Sherie M. Randolph, associate professor in the School of History and Sociology, has received two prestigious fellowships. During the 2021-22 academic year, Randolph will be a fellow at the University of Connecticut’s Humanities Institute. Randolph also received a non-residency fellowship

from Brown University’s Howard Foundation for her scholarship in the fields of African American history and Black Feminist Thought.

Larry Rubin, associate professor in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, has been named a 2021 Templeton Fellow in National Security by the Foreign Policy Research Institute. Rubin, who has served in the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy, is a national security expert focusing on Middle East politics, nuclear proliferation, and terrorism, as well as Islamic movements. He was also recently named co-editor of *Terrorism and Political Violence*, the leading journal in terrorism studies.

NACADA, an international association of professional advisors, counselors, faculty, administrators, and students working to enhance the educational development of students, recognized **Laura Tolliver**, academic advisor in the George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, with its Outstanding Advising Award – Primary Advising Role.

Richard Utz, professor and chair in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication, has been named to the advisory board of a new international book series, *Reinterpreting the Middle Ages: From Medieval to Neo*, published by Brepols Publishers in Belgium.

The American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering has honored **Ajit Yoganathan** with its Professional Impact Award for Education and **Manu Platt** with a Professional Impact Award for Diversity. They were recognized in March at a virtual awards ceremony. Yoganathan is Regents Professor Emeritus and the Wallace H. Coulter Distinguished Faculty Chair in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering; Platt is an associate professor in the Coulter Department.

MEDALS OF HONOR

John D. Cressler (left) and Justin K. Romberg, both faculty members in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, received two of the most prestigious honors presented by the IEEE, the world's largest technical professional organization dedicated to advancing technology for the benefit of humanity. Cressler and Romberg were both honored with IEEE medals at the IEEE Vision, Innovation, and Challenges Summit and Honors Ceremony, held virtually in May. Cressler was awarded with the 2021 IEEE James H. Mulligan Jr. Education Medal for a career of outstanding contributions to education in the fields of interest to IEEE. Romberg was honored as a co-recipient of the 2021 IEEE Jack S. Kilby Signal Processing Medal for outstanding contributions in signal processing.



Photo courtesy of the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering

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downloadable resources that are aligned with standards across various subjects to use in the classroom, all of which have been informed and designed using these artifacts,” Wilson said. “So if I am a computer science teacher, and I want to get my students excited about computer science and coding, this space would be somewhere that they could come and get content, digital content, that they could use in the classroom.”

Hip Hop VR Experience Coming

The archive includes thousands of albums, autographs, posters, and flyers from hip hop's early days in Atlanta. Wilson and a team of student assistants removed the items from Webster's childhood basement, but not before using 3D-scanning technology to create an interactive virtual recreation of the space.

“There's a lot of privilege associated with having a hip hop archive at a place like Georgia Tech,” Wilson said. “We wanted to make sure that we took this physical archive and made it digital

so that people can interact with the resources as much as possible. To not do that would be anti-hip hop.”

Wilson said the archive is a tool that allows students to engage in hip hop as music and culture and as a design concept. It also allows them to consider how the focus on justice and equity can provide insight into STEM careers.

The virtual experience is not quite ready, Wilson said, but you can view videos of the experience on the project website: fourfourbeatproject.org/hiphophighered.

“We hope to make the VR experience available in the next year. The pandemic required us to pivot to building out other features of the archive,” Wilson said.

“There's a quote that I love by Grandmaster Caz, one of the very first MCs, who says that hip hop

didn't invent anything, it reinvented everything. So, what hip hop does to music, or what it does to dance, or what it does to fashion, or what it does to technology, is it remixes it and makes it something different,” Wilson said.

“At an institute of technology, particularly at a place where you have creatives and engineers and makers, what hip hop allows one to do is to understand how we can engineer, how we can design, how we can make things that are culturally sound, humanistic, but also technologically advanced,” she said.

‘Your Voice Is Power’

The archive is just one of Wilson's projects. She is also working with fellow LMC Professor Brian Magerko, musician Pharrell Williams, and Amazon on “Your Voice Is Power,” an educational program and competition that teaches students to speak up on equity issues while learning to code with a music remixing program called EarSketch. Magerko and Jason Freeman, professor and chair in the School of Music, lead that project.



Joycelyn Wilson